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The Associated Press State & Local Wire

December 30, 1999, Thursday, PM cycle

## **Giuliani contributor denies mob ties**

**BYLINE:** By TIMOTHY WILLIAMS, Associated Press Writer

**SECTION:** State and Regional

**LENGTH:** 636 words

**DATELINE:** NEW YORK

A major contributor to the campaigns of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Sen. Charles Schumer who is reputed to have ties to the Russian mafia, said he has no mob links and denied that any such group exists.

On Wednesday, Semyon (Sam) Kislin, 64, denied allegations from a 1994 FBI report that alleges his commodities trading company has been involved in money laundering and co-sponsored a U.S. visa for a man the FBI identified as the head of one of Russia's top mafia organizations who is also suspected of being a contract killer.

The FBI report also alleges that Kislin employed another reputed mob figure as the manager of his Manhattan company, Trans Commodities Inc.

"It's simply not true," Kislin, 64, said at a midtown news conference. "I am not now, nor have I ever been a member of the Russian mafia. What I did in business, I did for my business and not for any mobsters."

Kislin, a Ukrainian immigrant well-known among the Russian Jewish community in south Brooklyn, added: "There's no such thing as the Russian mafia. ... It's media hysteria."

Kislin's attorney, Gerald Walpin, has written a letter to FBI director Louis Freeh asking the FBI to investigate who leaked the contents of the FBI intelligence report.

Kislin said he believes whoever released the data

sought to embarrass Giuliani politically. Giuliani is expected to run for the U.S. Senate next year against first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

"Since I am too unimportant a person in America to be the target of anyone, I am convinced someone attacked me only because I happened to have contributed money to Mayor Giuliani's election campaign, and this allowed someone to attack Mayor Giuliani by claiming that I, a contributor, had done something evil," said Kislin, reading from a statement. "I have done nothing evil."

Kislin, various relatives, and his companies, raised or donated \$64,950 to Giuliani's mayoral campaigns in 1993 and 1997; \$8,000 to Schumer's 1998 U.S. Senate race; and \$7,700 to Jules Polonetsky, Giuliani's running mate in 1997 and the city's current commissioner of Consumer Affairs.

He has given smaller amounts to the re-election campaigns of President Bill Clinton, former Republican Sen. Al D'Amato and others.

Kislin also was listed as a co-chair for a Giuliani fundraiser in May that raised \$2.1 million, although Kislin and Giuliani deny that Kislin has contributed to the mayor's prospective Senate campaign. Federal Elections Commission reports show no such contribution.

Kislin has been a board member of the city's Economic Development Corporation since 1996. A letter from Giuliani to Kislin dated Dec. 2, 1999 informs Kislin of his reappointment to the board and concludes "your continued service is deeply appreciated."

Public Advocate Mark Green has asked that Kislin resign from the board until an inquiry by the city's Department of Investigation is completed. The Department of Investigation did not immediately return a call for comment on Wednesday.

Kislin acknowledged Wednesday he had once been the target of an FBI investigation, but said the FBI had never filed charges against him.

Joel Bartow, the former FBI agent who headed that

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investigation, said the allegations about Kislin's mob ties are the result of a mix-up. Bartow said that several years ago, the FBI confused the name of Kislin's company, Trans Commodities Inc., with a firm called Transeas Commodities.

"After learning the distinction between the two firms, I personally wrote a teletype to FBI headquarters explaining the mistake in the intelligence report," said Bartow.

But Bartow, who is now a private investigator, acknowledged that since he left the FBI he has worked for Kislin and is currently on retainer to Kislin's attorney.

FBI officials declined to comment.

**PERSON:** SEMYON (SAM)  
KISLIN (97%); RUDOLPH WILLIAM  
GIULIANI (94%); CHARLES  
SCHUMER (74%); JOEL BARTOW (71%); LOUIS J  
FREEH (51%);

**ORGANIZATION:** FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (94%);

**COUNTRY:** AMERICA (70%);

**COMPANY:** FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (94%);

**SUBJECT:** ORGANIZED CRIME (93%); MAYORS (90%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (90%); POLITICS (90%); POLITICAL CANDIDATES (78%); INVESTIGATIONS (77%); FUNDRAISING (7 TRADING (71%); ECONOMIC NEWS (68%); ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (68%); FRAUD & FINANCIAL CRIME (56%); MONEY LAUNDERING (56%);

**LOAD-DATE:** December 31, 1999

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

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